

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 25-30 have been previously cancelled without prejudice to consideration in a subsequent continuing application. Please amend claims 1 and 15 as set forth in the complete listing of the claims and their status that follows:

1. (currently amended) A dynamic stabilization system for stabilization of the spine, comprising:

a stabilization element configured to span between at least two vertebrae of the spine and defining a longitudinal axis along the length of said element:

at least two bone anchors, each having a bone engagement portion; and

at least two connectors for connecting a corresponding one of said bone anchors to said stabilization element at least one connector including;

a flexible element supported between the bone anchor and the stabilization element substantially along said longitudinal axis of said element to permit relative pivoting therebetween; and

an adjustment element for adjusting the flexibility of said flexible element.

2. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 1, wherein said at least one connector includes a bearing member attached to said stabilization element, said bearing member including said flexible element.

3. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 2, wherein:

said stabilization element includes an elongated spinal rod;

said bearing member is a rod end bearing including a rod engagement portion;

and said flexible element is a bearing element of said rod end bearing.

4. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 3, wherein:

said bearing element is received within a bearing race of said rod end bearing; and

said adjustment element is arranged to compress said bearing element within said bearing race.

5. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 3, wherein said rod engagement portion includes a bore for receiving a portion of said spinal rod therein and a set screw for clamping said spinal rod within said bore.

6. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 1, wherein:

at least one of said bone anchors includes a stem having a threaded portion;

said flexible element includes a bore for receiving said stem therethrough; and

said adjustment element includes a nut engaging said threaded portion and arranged to compress said flexible element as said nut is threaded onto said threaded portion.

7. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 6, wherein said at least one of said bone anchors includes an intermediate portion between said stem and said bone engagement portion, said intermediate portion configured to support said flexible element so that said flexible element is compressed between said intermediate portion and said nut when said nut is threaded onto said threaded portion.

8. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 1, wherein another of said connectors is configured to substantially rigidly connect one of said bone anchors to said stabilization element.

Claims 9 – 14 (withdrawn)

15. (currently amended) A dynamic stabilization system for stabilization of the spine, comprising:

a stabilization element configured to span between at least two vertebrae of the spine:

at least two bone anchors, each having a bone engagement portion and a stem portion; and

at least two connectors for connecting a corresponding one of said bone anchors to said stabilization element, at least one connector including a bearing member associated with said stabilization element and including a bearing race mounted within said bearing member and a flexible bearing element mounted within said bearing race, said flexible bearing element configured to receive said stem portion of said bone anchor therethrough.

16. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 15 wherein said at least one connector includes an adjustment element for adjusting the flexibility of said flexible bearing element.

17. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 16, wherein said adjustment element is arranged to compress said bearing element within said bearing race.

18. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 17, wherein:

said stem of least one of said bone anchors includes a threaded portion; and

said adjustment element includes a nut engaging said threaded portion and arranged to compress said flexible bearing element as said nut is threaded onto said threaded portion.

19. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 15, wherein:

said stabilization element includes an elongated spinal rod;

said bearing member is a rod end bearing including a rod engagement portion configured for engagement to said spinal rod.

20. (original) The dynamic stabilization system according to claim 19, wherein said rod engagement portion includes a bore for receiving a portion of said spinal rod therein and a set screw for clamping said spinal rod within said bore.

Claims 21 – 24 (withdrawn)

Claims 25 – 30 (cancelled)